

# Malawi Lomwe language

**Malawi Lomwe**, known as *Elhomwe*, is a dialect of the Lomwe language spoken in southeastern Malawi.

## Background

The Lomwe are one of the four largest ethnic groups living in Malawi and have history of migration across the Mozambique–Malawi border. Many Lomwe moved into Malawi to wars da the end of the 19th century and got mixed with the Chewa, in the 1930s due to tribal wars in Mozambique. The Elhomwe language spoken in Malawi is to a large extent a Mihavane dialect while in some districts like Thyolo there are traces of Kokholha dialect. Just like all major tribes of Malawi, the Lhomwes are not natives of Malawi but the Akafula also known as the Mwandionelapati or Abathwa, were the original natives of Malawi.

The Malawian government has taken a step in preserving the language by broadcasting news in Elhomwe language on its MBC radio 1. The establishment of the cultural organisation Mulhako Wa Alhomwe by the late President of Malawi, Bingu wa Mutharika, on 25 October, 2008, was another milestone. The Mulhako Wa Alhomwe has its headquarters at Chonde in Mulanje District. It was set up to preserve Lhomwe customs, beliefs and language. It has a library and a school of Elhomwe.

Although the Elhomwe dialect spoken in Malawi is not mutually intelligible with other dialects of Lomwe spoken in Mozambique it shares many similarities including vocabulary. For instance one could note the similarities in the following word forms: *otchuna* (Emakhuwa), *onthuna* (Lmeetto), and *ohuna* (Elhomwe) meaning "to want". Similarly the word for "women" is *anamwaani* (Emakhuwa and Elhomwe), *anumwane* (Lmeetto).

## References

1.

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2.

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3.

Jouni Filip Maho, 2009. New Updated Guthrie List Online (<https://web.archive.org/web/20180203191542/http://goto.glocalnet.net/mahopapers/nuglonline.pdf>)

Malawi Lomwe	
Anguru, Nguru	
<i>Elhomwe</i>	
Native to	Malawi
Native speakers	2,290,000 (2012) <sup>[1]</sup>
Language family	Niger–Congo <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Atlantic-Congo<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Volta-Congo<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Benue-Congo<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Bantoid<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Southern Bantoid<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Bantu<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Southern Bantu<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Makua<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Lomwe<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>Malawi Lomwe</b></li></ul></li></ul></li></ul></li></ul></li></ul></li></ul></li></ul></li></ul></li></ul></li></ul>
Language codes	
ISO 639-3	lon
Glottolog	mala1256 ( <a href="http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/mala1256">http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/mala1256</a> ) <sup>[2]</sup>
Guthrie code	P.331 <sup>[3]</sup>

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